

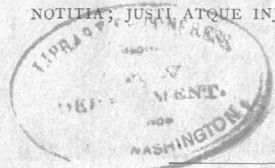
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# GREAT LAWYER.

"JURISPRUDENTIA EST DIVINARUM ATQUE HUMANARUM RERUM  
NOTITIA; JUSTI ATQUE INJUSTI SCIENTIA."



BY  
CHARLES C. BONNEY.

CHICAGO:  
THE CHICAGO LEGAL NEWS COMPANY.

1881.



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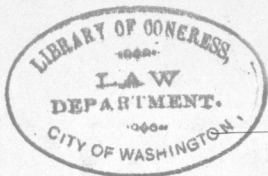
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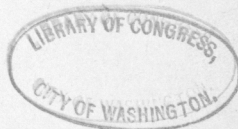
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### Publishers' Announcement.

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MR. BONNEY's sketch of the characteristics of a Great Lawyer was printed in the CHICAGO LEGAL NEWS, ten years ago. It was received with great favor by the profession and the public, and was widely copied. It is now re-published in a permanent form. The author has long been known as one of the most distinguished members of the Chicago Bar, and a writer on political and legal subjects, of wide reputation.





## A GREAT LAWYER.

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A truly Great Lawyer is one of the highest products of civilization. He is a master of the science of human experience. He sells his clients the results of that experience, and is thus the merchant of wisdom. The labors of many generations of legislators and judges enrich his stores. His learning is sufficient to enable him to realize the comparative littleness of all human achievements. He has outlived the ambition of display before courts and juries. He loves justice, law, and peace.

He has learned to bear criticism without irritation; censure without anger; and calumny without retaliation. He has learned how surely all schemes of evil bring disaster to those who support them; and that the granite shaft of a noble reputation cannot be destroyed by the poisoned breath of slander.

A Great Lawyer will not do a mean thing for money. He hates vice, and delights to stand forth a conquering champion of virtue. The good opinions of the just are precious in his esteem; but neither

love of friends, nor fear of foes, can swerve him from the path of duty.

He esteems his office of counsellor as higher than political place or scholastic distinction. He detests unnecessary litigation, and delights in averting danger and restoring peace by wise counsel and skillful plans. The good works of the counsel-room are sweeter to him than the glories of the forum. He proves that honesty is the best policy ; and that peace pays both lawyer and client, better than controversy.

In a legal contest, he will give his client the benefit of the best presentation of whatever points of fact or of law may be in his power ; but he will neither pervert the law, nor falsify the facts to defeat an adversary. The motto of his battle-flag is : Fidelity to the law and the facts,—*semper fidelis*.

The splendor of his intellectual attainments, and the beauty of his moral character, like the white robes of righteousness, cover all defects of person, voice, and manner.

Governments, corporations, merchants, manufacturers, and producers, apply to him for guidance. It is his business to know the principles which govern their various affairs, and the rules under which disaster may be avoided, and success attained. He studies thousands of cases which illustrate and declare the ways of prosperity in business, and the secret causes of calamity



therein. The results of these cases are stated in the opinions of courts, and they are reliable because every step thereto has been contested by counsel, and subjected to judgment.

It is pleasanter, easier, and cheaper to buy the results of experience from a competent lawyer, than to arrive at the like results by suffering the experience.

A Great Lawyer knows the nature and limits of power, and defends the rights of persons and of property against its encroachments. The courts listen to him with pleasure, for they know he will illuminate the subject of discussion with learning, reason and authority, even if he fail to convince them that the particular judgment he asks ought to be given.

His associates regard him with affectionate esteem, for he seeks to deprive no one of his just honors or rewards. His dignity requires no stilts to uphold it; and his stores of learning and courtesy are so ample, that though always giving, he has always enough and to spare.

It is estimated that year by year, the counsel of a good lawyer will decrease the dangers of failure more than fifty per cent., and largely add to the profits of any commercial or manufacturing business.

He takes the client's place, free from the bias of the self-interest that so often blinds the business man to the approach of peril.

Seeking fame and fortune chiefly by wise counsel to business men, the Great Lawyer will incidentally win distinction and the rewards of toil, by consummate ability in the conduct of causes before the courts. A statesman in the counsel-room, he becomes a general in the forum, and delights the observer with displays of the magnificent art of war. When war is inevitable, he remembers that the truest mercy is to make it in earnest; and he tries the case that must be litigated, so that a thousand may be settled by its results. This is why the public bear so large a share of the expenses of judicial proceedings, and why litigation is so expensive to the client, and relatively so unprofitable to the lawyer. The public have the benefit of the contest. The client pays too much for the result. The lawyer receives too little for his time, labor, and learning. It is in his office that his golden opinions bring the amplest golden rewards, to the equal satisfaction of himself and his patrons. Both are spared the delays, the vexations, and the expenses of a course through the courts.

As a general rule, controversies should be settled under the direction of lawyers. It is only as an exception that they should go to the courts. There will be litigation enough from the perversity of parties in some cases, and the inherent difficulty of the case in others; and unless it be manifest that efforts at ami-

cable adjustment will be fruitless, the lawyer should try to effect a settlement. And the client should be as willing to pay for the results of a litigation, without the litigation, as for the same results burdened by delay, vexation, and increased expenses. Thus the true interest of the client is the true interest of the lawyer ; and peace-making better than strife.

If it be said that such lawyers as are here described are not abundant, it may be replied that the supply is probably equal to the demand ; and that the profession will doubtless conform to this ideal as rapidly as the community may require. But the number of really good lawyers is very great ; and if sought for, they are easily found. Scarcely any community is without them, and the fidelity of the profession as a whole, to the trusts committed to its charge, is one of its crowning distinctions. It has its vagabonds and imposters, like other callings, but they are more easily known and shunned than those of almost any other pursuit. It is not a difficult matter to learn the legal, moral, and social character of any member of the profession ; and if one choose to patronize a mock-auction, he should not complain of the wares he is sure to receive there.

The architects of civil government must necessarily be lawyers. Untrained hands can no more draw constitutions, statutes, and ordinances, than build ships,



or erect temples. It is the work of the lawyer, in the higher walks of the profession, to discover, invent, preserve, fortify, defend, and vindicate the best means of securing "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Could any calling be more beneficial to the community, or more honorable to those who follow it faithfully?

Unfortunately, there are members of the legal profession who are not lawyers. One may be familiar with law-books; may practice law, and may even act as judge, and still not be a lawyer in the true sense of the term. With ordinary talent and industry, one may follow law as a trade with a fair measure of apparent success. With great intellectual and moral endowments, and a natural taste for jurisprudence as the science of human affairs, he may, by prodigious labor and the blessing of Providence, become an eminent lawyer.

The gift of eloquence is as dangerous to a lawyer, as that of beauty is to a woman. It tempts its possessor to build his house upon the sand of a mere accomplishment, instead of the enduring rock of an informed and cultivated judgment. But as great merit and beauty are sometimes found united in the same person, so also are brilliant eloquence, and equal intellectual power.

The highest type of lawyer must be, in the truest

sense, a Christian gentleman. How shall he understand the spirit of the law, if he learn it not at the feet of the Supreme Law-giver? How shall he advise the tribunals of justice, if he learn not wisdom of Him who alone is perfectly just? How shall he counsel concession to avoid controversy, if he be not taught by the Divine Counsellor, who is the Prince of Peace? Such a lawyer thrives, not on the misfortunes, but on the prosperity, of his fellow men. His fortune increases with their success. They rely upon his judgment with confidence, and on his fidelity without fear.

Officers of the judicial courts; counsellors of the highest human tribunals; sworn upholders of the constitution and the laws, and defenders of private and public rights; ministers of justice and equity; the character and conduct of lawyers can never be a matter of indifference to the public mind.

Intimately connected with the administration of the government, and largely concerned in all that constitutes the greatness of the nation, the virtues of the legal profession, and the honors of the leaders of the bar, are inseparable from the national fame.

If such a lawyer be elevated to the bench, his virtues shine with a brighter lustre, and his labors are crowned with higher and more far-reaching results. He discerns the soul of justice in the forms of law; penetrates the disguises of wrong; and so applies the

legal principles applicable to the case, as best to repress the evil and promote the right. Before his judgment-seat the law is a living science, keeping pace with the advance of civilization, and adapting itself with wondrous flexibility to new conditions as they arise. The fetters of obsolete forms are powerless to bind the arms of Justice where he presides. He claims no authority to create new rights, but in the recognition and enforcement of rights otherwise conferred, he magnifies his lofty office, and sits in judgment the terror of the evil-doer, and the friend of the oppressed. The student who ponders the opinions of such a judge learns the meaning of the maxim :

JURISPRUDENCE IS THE SCIENCE OF JUSTICE.

[1870.]





